OPTIONAL FORM NO. 10
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UNITED STATES GOVERNMENT

Memorandum

TO : Mr. Gebhardt

DATE: June 26, 1975

FROM : J. S. Peelman

1 - Mr. Gebhardt
1 - Mr. Peelman
1 - Mr. McDonough
1 - Mr. Moore

SUBJECT: MURKIN

Assoc. Dir. ____
Dep. AD Adm. ____
Dep. AD Inv. ____
Asst. Dir.: ____
Admin. ____
Comp. Syst. ____
Ext. Affairs ____
Files & Com. ____
Gen. Inv. ____
Ident. ____
Inspection ____
Intell. ____
Laboratory ____
Plan. & Eval. ____
Spec. Inv. ____
Training ____
Legal Coun. ____
Telephone Rm. ____
Director Sec'y ____

BACKGROUND: This is the case involving the murder of Martin Luther King in Memphis, Tennessee, in April, 1968. James Earl Ray had pleaded guilty in State Court, Tennessee, and is presently serving a 99-year sentence.

Ray had appealed his conviction on grounds that he was not properly represented or counseled by his attorney at the time he entered his guilty plea in 1969. However, in February, 1975, a Writ of Habeas Corpus was denied Ray in U. S. District Court, Western District of Tennessee.

On June 21, 1975, the Wire Services carried information revealed by Atlanta, Georgia, Public Safety Commissioner Reginald Eaves, to the effect that Eaves was in possession of "... strong information on the conspiracy" in the death of Martin Luther King. Eaves indicated that he had received this information from a second party, which information "warrants our serious consideration." A copy of this information was furnished by Eaves to our Atlanta Office.

A review of this information by the Atlanta Division revealed that the source, Robert Byron Watson, previously had been interviewed by Special Agents of the Atlanta Division on 4/7/71. At that time, Watson admitted that his information pertaining to the murder of Martin Luther King was completely fabricated. Subsequent investigation also failed to substantiate any of the information as revealed by Watson. The results of that interview and of the subsequent investigation were furnished to the Civil Rights Division, U. S. Department of Justice, in April, 1971.

REC-5 44-38861-5913

The information furnished by Mr. Eaves to the Atlanta Office is identical to that previously furnished to the Atlanta Office in 1971.

44-38861
Enclosure

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Peelman to Gebhardt memorandum
RE: MURKIN

ACTION: If approved, to preclude any further misguided releases on the part of Mr. Eaves, he will be advised of the previous receipt and resolution of the information from Watson. Attached is an airtel along these lines.

The Civil Rights Division is being furnished a copy of the information received from Mr. Eaves and its attention will be directed to the results of the previous investigation conducted thereon.